

Message Text

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43

ACTION CPR-01

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 /008 W
----- 028545
R 031513Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7362

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDIP, GB
SUBJ: GABONESE EMBASSY DEBTS IN WASHINGTON

REF: STATE 022659; 75 STATE 042711

1. COURTESY CALL AT FOREIGN MINISTRY BY VISITING DESK
OFFICER BLODGETT (ACCOMPANIED BY DCM) PROVIDED OCCASION
FOR RENEWED DISCUSSION OF GABONESE EMBASSY DEBTS.

2. BLODGETT GAVE DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS TCHICAYA
AIDE-MEMOIRE LISTING INDIVIDUAL DEBTS (COMPILED FROM
TWO HELPFUL REFTELS) AND PERSONALLY EXPLAINED SERIOUSNESS
OF PROBLEM IN TERMS OF (A) TIME SPENT BY DEPARTMENT AND
GABONESE EMBASSY DEALING WITH CREDITORS, AND (B)
DAMAGE DONE GABON'S IMAGE IN WASHINGTON.

3. TCHICAYA WAS KNOWLEDGEABLE AND CONCERNED ABOUT
PROBLEM BUT UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO MAKE POSITIVE COM-
MITMENT THAT IT WILL BE RESOLVED. HE DID PROMISE,
HOWEVER, TO RESUBMIT MATTER TO MINISTRY OF FINANCE
FOR DETERMINATION WHETHER FOREIGN MINISTRY COULD PAY
DEBTS INCURRED BY INDIVIDUAL GABONESE DIPLOMATS EVEN
THOUGH THIS IS CONTRARY TO NORMAL GOG PRACTICE.

4. DESPITE FACT SUCH ACTION WOULD BE EXCEPTION TO USUAL
RULE, TCHICAYA SUGGESTED IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT GOG MIGHT
STEP IN THIS TIME TO PAY DEBTS. BASIS OF THIS UNUSUAL
ACTION WOULD BE (A) PRESIDENT BONGO'S PERSONAL INTEREST
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IN CLEARING UP SITUATION; (B) EFFECT DEBTS WERE HAVING

ON GABON'S IMAGE IN WASHINGTON AND U.S., AND (C) FACT
THAT PRACTICALLY ALL THE INDIVIDUAL DEBTORS REMAIN IN
DIPLOMATIC SERVICE AND COULD BE FORCED TO REIMBURSE GOG.

5. COMMENT: EMBASSY NOT IN POSITION TO PREDICT WHETHER
FINANCE MINISTRY WILL ALLOW FOREIGN MINISTRY TO PAY THESE
DEBTS. IF NO RESULTS ARE EVIDENT OVER NEXT FEW WEEKS,
AMBASSADOR PLANS RAISE QUESTION PERSONALLY WITH FOREIGN
MINISTER AS NEXT STEP IN CAMPAIGN, USING FACT OF PRESIDENT
BONGO'S KNOWN PERSONAL INTEREST AS LEVER TO OBTAIN HOPED-
FOR ACTION. STEIGMAN

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Message Attributes

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